



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Public Affairs**

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Michael F. Easley, Governor

Dempsey Benton, Secretary

For release: Immediate
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State Officials Recall Produce Tainted with Salmonella

RALEIGH – Results of ongoing disease and food investigations conducted by state public health and state agriculture officials have triggered a recall of jalapeno peppers and avocados distributed in North Carolina. Two samples from a food distributor tested positive for salmonella.

The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) has asked a Charlotte food distributor to recall jalapeno peppers and HASS avocados it received from a specific Texas food supply company because of possible salmonella contamination. In addition, the Texas supplier has been requested to recall all of the implicated products distributed in North Carolina.

NCDA&CS Food and Drug Protection Division and the N.C. Division of Environmental Health staff are working to determine how many North Carolina food distributors, restaurants, grocery stores and other food sellers received this produce. The HASS avocados were shipped from Texas in boxes labeled "Frutas Finas de Tancitaro HASS Avocados, Produce of Mexico," 60 count with lot number HUE08160090889. The jalapenos were shipped in black plastic crates weighing about 15 pounds and containing no brand name or other label.

Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler emphasized that locally grown produce is not implicated in this contamination and that North Carolina produce may be consumed with proper handling. "We are working quickly and carefully with our state, local and federal partners in an attempt to solve this case," Troxler said.

Once the establishments have been identified, regional environmental health staff and NCDA&CS Food and Drug Protection Division staff will conduct site visits to aid in the disposal of the product.

"We want to prevent the possibility of anyone consuming these contaminated food products," Environmental Health Director Terry Pierce said. "Regional environmental health staff has been mobilized to inspect more than 100 food establishments in 25 counties across the state to ensure the product is properly disposed of in a timely manner."

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There is no indication at this time that this contamination is the same Salmonella Saintpaul strain that has sickened 23 people in North Carolina and more than 1,200 people nationwide. State Public Health Director Leah Devlin said, "We do not know yet whether this is the Salmonella Saintpaul strain, but these potentially contaminated products must be removed regardless. Consumers are cautioned to prepare their vegetables properly. Raw produce should always be thoroughly washed under running water and produce that is to be consumed raw should be kept separate from raw meats, raw seafood, and raw produce items."

Additional testing by the North Carolina laboratories and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will be necessary to determine whether the salmonella matches the Salmonella Saintpaul which is causing the national outbreak.

